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REMARKS

- Claims 1 to 28 are pending
- Claim 18 has been amended herein
- Claims 1, 9, 14, and 24 are the only independent claims

Section 112, Paragraph 2 Rejection of Claim 18

Claims 18 through 20 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. Section 112, paragraph 2 as having "insufficient antecedent basis" for the limitation "blades of the overhead transfer flange." Applicants have herein amended Claim 18 to recite "a plurality of blades of the overhead transfer flange." Thus, as amended, an antecedent basis is not required for the term "blades." Support for claiming a plurality of blades may be found at least, for example, at the paragraph that starts at page 8, line 26. Therefore, Applicants respectfully request withdrawal of the Section 112 rejection of Claim 18 and dependent Claims 19 and 20.

Section 102 Rejection of Claims 1,2,4-15,17-19,21-26,&28

Claims 1, 2, 4 to 15, 17 to 19, 21 to 26, and 28 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. Section 102(b) as anticipated by U.S. Patent No. 5,788,458 filed July 10, 1995 and issued August 4, 1998 to Anthony C. Bonora (hereinafter "Bonora"). Applicants respectfully traverse this rejection.

Each of independent Claims 1, 9, 14, and 24 recite "an overhead carrier support." However, this feature of Applicants' invention is not taught or even suggested anywhere within the Bonora reference primarily because the Bonora reference is directed to a vertical transfer system for cassettes and not an overhead system. Thus, Bonora

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does not even contemplate an overhead transfer system that would employ the overhead carrier support recited in Applicants' claims. Therefore, for this reason, Applicants respectfully request the withdrawal of the Section 102 rejection of independent Claims 1, 9, 14, and 24. In addition and for the same reason, Applicants respectfully request the withdrawal of the Section 102 rejection of Claims 2, 4 to 8, 10 to 13, 15, 17 to 19, 21 to 23, 25, 26, and 28 which depend from Claims 1, 9, 14, and 24, respectively.

Further, in rejecting independent Claims 1, 9, and 24, the Examiner asserts that the "top surface of [cassette] 106" "discloses a flange having a first side opposite a wider second side." However, as can be seen in the marked-up copy of FIG. 4A of Bonora below, both sides (labeled [A] and [B] by Applicants) of the top surface of cassette 106 are the same width.

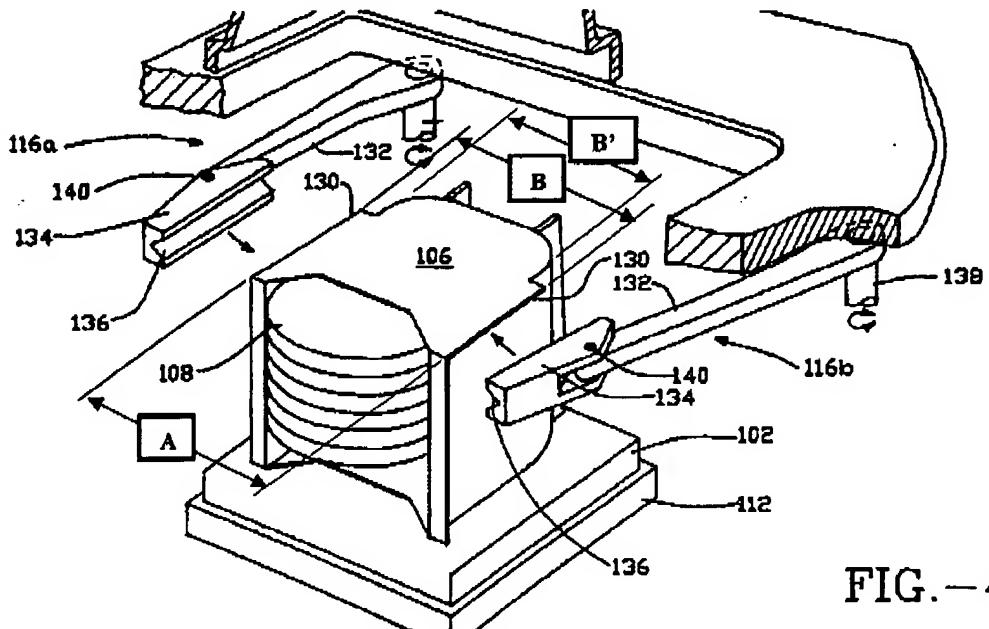


FIG. - 4A

Thus, the Examiner's assertion that Bonora discloses a flange having a first side opposite a wider second side is

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incorrect. The Examiner appears to be asserting that [B'] is the width of the first side. However, this interpretation ignores the two portions of the first side that surround the rounded portion of the first side (i.e., the difference between [B] and [B']).

In contrast to Bonora's top surface of cassette 106, Applicants' claimed overhead transfer flange (an example embodiment of which is depicted below in the marked-up copy of a portion of Applicants' FIG. 2) clearly has a first side [B] opposite a wider second side [A].

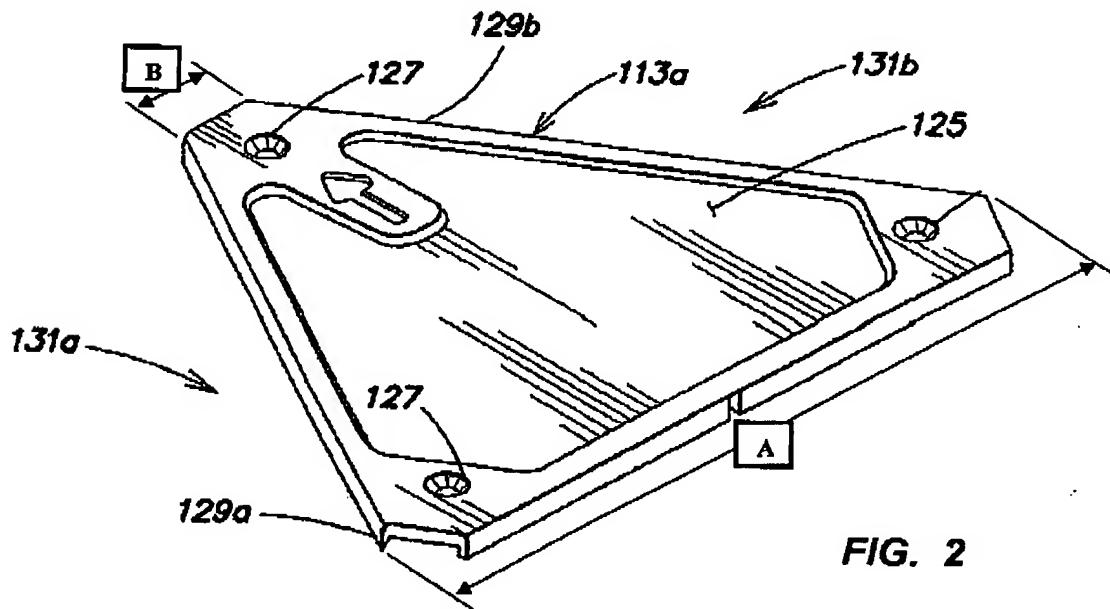


FIG. 2

Even further, as also can be seen in the marked-up copy of FIG. 4A of Bonora, the top surface of cassette 106 is actually part of the cassette body and not a "flange adapted to couple to a substrate carrier body," as recited in Applicants' Claims 1, 9, and 24. Thus, because the Bonora reference does not disclose (1) an overhead carrier support, (2) a flange with sides of different widths, and (3) a flange adapted to couple to a substrate carrier body,

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Applicants respectfully assert that Bonora does not anticipate Applicants' Claims 1, 9, and 24. Therefore, Applicants respectfully request withdrawal of the Section 102 rejection of these claims and their respective dependant claims for these additional reasons.

Regarding Claim 14, Applicants' claim recites an "overhead carrier support" with "a second side opposite the first side that is wider than the first side." Even if Bonora disclosed an overhead carrier support, which it does not, the gripping arms 116a, 116b which rotate about shafts 138 of Bonora clearly lack first and second sides, especially since the gripping arms 116a, 116b can rotate. Much less, Bonora clearly lacks first and second sides of different widths. Thus, despite the Examiner's unexplained and unfounded assertion to the contrary, Applicants respectfully assert that Bonora cannot reasonably be interpreted as teaching an "overhead carrier support" with "a second side opposite the first side that is wider than the first side" and thus, Applicants respectfully request withdrawal of the Section 102 rejection of independent Claim 14, as well as the rejection of dependant Claims 15, 17 to 19, and 21 to 23.

Regarding Claims 2 and 10, specifically, the Examiner asserts that Bonora discloses third and fourth sides of the top surface of cassette 106 that each extend from the first side to the second side. Applicants note that if one was to accept this assertion, such assertion would preclude the Examiner's apparent interpretation of Bonoro FIG. 4A that the second side [A] is wider than the first side [B']. In other words, if the third and fourth sides of Bonora extend from the first side to the second side, the width of the first side of Bonora must be measured at the points

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indicated above at dimension [B] in the marked-up copy of FIG. 4A of Bonora and not at the rounded portion of the top surface ([B']) because otherwise the third and fourth sides do not extend all the way to the rounded portion. Thus, Applicants assert that, if the Examiner maintains his rejection of Claims 1, 9, and 24 as being anticipated by Bonora, it would be logically inconsistent to not withdraw the rejection of Claims 2 and 10 because the third and fourth sides of Bonora do not extend to the rounded side of the top surface of cassette 106.

Regarding Claim 7, despite the Examiner's unsupported assertion to the contrary, the ears 130 of Bonora are clearly not "radiused" as recited in Applicants' Claim 7. Thus, the Applicants respectfully request withdrawal of the Section 102 rejection of Claim 7 for this additional reason.

Regarding Claims 8 and 19, despite the Examiner's unsupported assertion to the contrary, the ears 130 of Bonora clearly do not have "a surface that is angled" as recited in Applicants' Claims 8 and 19. Thus, the Applicants respectfully request withdrawal of the Section 102 rejection of Claims 8 and 19 for this additional reason.

Regarding Claim 15, the Examiner has not identified anything within Bonora that even suggests first and second sides of an overhead carrier support, thus, the Examiner's rejection of Claim 15 based on the unsupported assertion that Bonora discloses third and fourth sides that extend from the first to second side is untenable. Applicants therefore respectfully request withdrawal of the Section 102 rejection of Claim 15 for this additional reason.

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Regarding Claim 21, despite the Examiner's unsupported assertion to the contrary, the system of Bonora clearly does not contemplate "an overhead conveyor system" as recited in Applicants' Claim 21. Thus, the Applicants respectfully request withdrawal of the Section 102 rejection of Claim 21 for this additional reason.

Regarding Claims 25 and 26, despite the Examiner's unsupported assertion to the contrary, the system of Bonora clearly does not contemplate "raising" the ears 130 over the gripping pads 134. As recited in Applicants' Claims 25 and 26, Applicants' invention involves a vertical motion to engage the flange, not a horizontal motion as disclosed in Bonora. Thus, the Applicants respectfully request withdrawal of the Section 102 rejection of Claims 25 and 26 for this additional reason.

Section 103 Rejection of Claims 3, 16, & 20

Claims 3, 16, and 20 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. Section 103(a) as unpatentable over Bonora in view of Gruber (DE 3703609A1). Applicants assert that Bonora fails to teach that which the Examiner relies upon it for as described above and that Gruber does not teach an overhead transfer flange either. Based on this, Applicants request withdrawal of the Section 103 rejection.

Further, the Examiner concedes that the top surface of cassette 106 of Bonora is not "about 60 degrees" and relies on Gruber for this teaching. Gruber appears to teach a hook with a 65 degree bend. However, despite the Examiner's assertion to the contrary, Gruber in no way teaches or suggests a flange, much less a flange with angled sides, and even less a flange with sides angled at 60 degrees. It is not clear at all to Applicants how the

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Examiner can assert that an angle hook suggests angling the sides of a flange. The two structures have completely different geometries and the angles are in completely different dimensions.

Further, the combination that the Examiner appears to be proposing does not seem to result in an a practicably operable or useable device. In other words, even if the hook of Gruber were used "to facilitate alignment and connection" with the cassette of Bonora as the Examiner suggests would motivate one of ordinary skill, it does not appear that an overhead carrier support could transport the cassette using such a hook. Thus, the Examiner has not provided a proper motivation to combine Bonora and Gruber.

Thus, for the above reasons, Applicants assert that the Examiner's Section 103 rejection based on Gruber is untenable and respectfully request withdrawal of the rejection.

Section 103 Rejection of Claim 27

Claim 27 stands rejected under 35 U.S.C. Section 103(a) as unpatentable over Bonora in view of U.S. Patent No. 3,885,825 issued to Amberg et al. (hereinafter "Amberg"). Applicants assert that Bonora fails to teach that which the Examiner relies upon it for as described above and that Amberg does not teach an overhead carrier support having a second side opposite the first side that is wider than the first side (as claimed) either. Based on this, Applicants request withdrawal of the Section 103 rejection.

CONCLUSION

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The Applicants believe all pending claims are in condition for allowance, and respectfully request reconsideration and allowance of the same.

The Applicants have enclosed herewith a Request for an Extension of Time and authorization to charge the requisite fee to Deposit Account No. 04-1696. The Applicants do not believe any additional Request for Extension of Time is required but if it is, please accept this paragraph as a request for such an Extension of Time and authorization to charge the requisite extension fee to Deposit Account No. 04-1696.

The Applicants do not believe any other fees are due regarding this amendment. If any other fees are required, however, please charge Deposit Account No. 04-1696.

The Applicants encourage the Examiner to telephone Applicants' attorney should any issues remain.

Respectfully Submitted,



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Tarrytown, New York